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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/850,203	05/08/2001	Yuji Saito	101213-00009	9728

7590 06/16/2004
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EXAMINER

DOVE, TRACY MAE

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1745

DATE MAILED: 06/16/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Advisory Action

Application No.

09/850,203

Applicant(s)

SAITO ET AL.

Examiner

Tracy Dove

Art Unit

1745

--The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

THE REPLY FILED 26 May 2004 FAILS TO PLACE THIS APPLICATION IN CONDITION FOR ALLOWANCE. Therefore, further action by the applicant is required to avoid abandonment of this application. A proper reply to a final rejection under 37 CFR 1.113 may only be either: (1) a timely filed amendment which places the application in condition for allowance; (2) a timely filed Notice of Appeal (with appeal fee); or (3) a timely filed Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.114.

PERIOD FOR REPLY [check either a) or b)]

- a) ☒ The period for reply expires 3 months from the mailing date of the final rejection.
b) ☐ The period for reply expires on: (1) the mailing date of this Advisory Action, or (2) the date set forth in the final rejection, whichever is later. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of the final rejection.
ONLY CHECK THIS BOX WHEN THE FIRST REPLY WAS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE FINAL REJECTION. See MPEP 706.07(f).

Extensions of time may be obtained under 37 CFR 1.136(a). The date on which the petition under 37 CFR 1.136(a) and the appropriate extension fee have been filed is the date for purposes of determining the period of extension and the corresponding amount of the fee. The appropriate extension fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is calculated from: (1) the expiration date of the shortened statutory period for reply originally set in the final Office action; or (2) as set forth in (b) above, if checked. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of the final rejection, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

1. ☐ A Notice of Appeal was filed on _____. Appellant's Brief must be filed within the period set forth in 37 CFR 1.192(a), or any extension thereof (37 CFR 1.191(d)), to avoid dismissal of the appeal.
2. ☐ The proposed amendment(s) will not be entered because:
- (a) ☐ they raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search (see NOTE below);
 - (b) ☐ they raise the issue of new matter (see Note below);
 - (c) ☐ they are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal; and/or
 - (d) ☐ they present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.
- NOTE: _____
3. ☐ Applicant's reply has overcome the following rejection(s): _____.
4. ☐ Newly proposed or amended claim(s) _____ would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claim(s).
5. ☐ The a) ☐ affidavit, b) ☐ exhibit, or c) ☐ request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because: _____.
6. ☐ The affidavit or exhibit will NOT be considered because it is not directed SOLELY to issues which were newly raised by the Examiner in the final rejection.
7. ☒ For purposes of Appeal, the proposed amendment(s) a) ☐ will not be entered or b) ☒ will be entered and an explanation of how the new or amended claims would be rejected is provided below or appended.

The status of the claim(s) is (or will be) as follows:

Claim(s) allowed: _____.

Claim(s) objected to: _____.

Claim(s) rejected: 2-5.

Claim(s) withdrawn from consideration: 6-10.

8. ☐ The drawing correction filed on _____ is a) ☐ approved or b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
9. ☐ Note the attached Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____.
10. ☒ Other: See attached sheet.

Attachment to Advisory Action (in response to after-final amendment of 5/26/04):

Applicant argues Lawless does not teach gas diffusion electrodes including a plurality of layers of material that are stacked in the axial direction of a tubular casing. However, the courts have ruled that product-by-process limitations, in the absence of unexpected results, are obvious. Therefore, whether the electrodes and/or tubular fuel cell are formed by stacking a plurality of layers of material therefor or by forming as a single layer (i.e., extrusion), the electrodes and/or tubular fuel cell, as an end result, appear to be identical. In re Fessman, 489 F2d 742; 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974). In re Marosi, 218 USPQ 289 (Fed. Cir. 1983). The burden is upon the applicant to come forward with evidence establishing an unobvious difference between the fuel cell of the claimed invention and the fuel cell of Lawless.

Applicant asserts that the fuel cell of the claimed invention has 1) a more compact design, 2) does not have variations in the thickness of the diffusion electrodes, 3) has a high power generating efficiency and 4) provides a fuel cell formed in an extremely fine pattern with controlled dimensions. However, evidence of unexpected results must distinguish the claimed invention over the prior art. None of the assertions 1-4 above are limitations of the claimed invention. Limitations of the specification are not read into the claims.

The courts have stated that a 35 U.S.C. 102/35 U.S.C. 103 rejection is proper when the claimed invention is a product-by-process. See MPEP 2113.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tracy Dove whose telephone number is 571-272-1285. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday (9:00-7:30).

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Pat Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

June 13, 2004


Patrick Ryan
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700